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Mid City Redevelopment Alliance and City-Parish Planning Commission honored for Brownfields Excellence

BATON ROUGE – Today, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the City-Parish Planning Commission celebrated the completion of a brownfields project in Baton Rouge. DEQ also presented the City-Parish and MCRA with an award for Brownfields Excellence.

Brownfields are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant.

The property is a 22,000 square foot building comprised of four separate structures located at 419 North 19th Street in Baton Rouge. C.J. Gayfer & Company is donating the building to MCRA, who will then continue extensive renovation and beautification of the property. The award ceremony took place at the site.

The environmental assessment and remediation was conducted as part of the Baton Rouge Brownfields Program. Administered by the City-Parish Planning Commission, the goal of the program is to facilitate the redevelopment of former industrial or commercial sites within the Greater Baton Rouge region. Reuse of brownfields properties can encourage redevelopment and growth in neighboring areas, in areas that were once abandoned or blighted. DEQ and EPA signified that the property has been remediated of environmental hazards and the cleanup will enable MCRA to make a full, expanded and enhanced use of the property. Funding for the cleanup was made possible by DEQ in partnership with EPA and the City-Parish, which enabled the cleanup of asbestos, lead paint and other contamination at the site.

“MCRA has worked with the City-Parish Brownfields Program for more than 10 years trying to secure the cleanup funds needed to remove the contamination issues that prevented us from accepting the building when first offered,” said Samuel Sanders, Executive Director for MCRA. “We were surprised when we learned that DEQ offered the much sought after funds through a pilot remediation program for non-profit organizations in late 2008. We quickly signed up and have been working with them ever since.”

“This is a fine example of community revitalization making a positive impact on environmental and economic growth within the state,” said Peggy Hatch, DEQ Secretary. “Mid City Redevelopment and the City-Parish Planning Commission have worked together toward the future rehabilitation and reuse of this building.”

“EPA’s Brownfields program helps revitalize former industrial and commercial sites, turning them from problem properties to productive community use,” said EPA Region 6 Superfund Division Director Sam Coleman. “This program is a great example of how state and local partners, working with EPA, can turn properties into viable developments.”

Eligible sites must be located within East Baton Rouge Parish and consist of abandoned or underutilized sites that have a real or perceived state of contamination.